



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:  
MICHELLE MOWERY JOHNSON  
(615) 313-4707

## **VULNERABLE ADULTS AT RISK DURING EXTREME SUMMER HEAT** *PUBLIC URGED TO CHECK ON ELDERLY AND NEIGHBORS WITH DISABILITIES*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee Department of Human Services' Adult Protective Services (APS) division is urging the public to watch out for vulnerable neighbors who may not be watching out for themselves during this intense heat wave. APS counselors across the state are checking on their elderly clients and those with disabilities.

"A majority of our APS clients—nearly 60 percent—are referred to the Department because of self-neglect," said DHS Commissioner Gina Lodge. "These clients are most at risk for heat-related illnesses, because they may not have or be running their air conditioning or fans and sadly, may be staying shut inside overheated homes. It is imperative that we, along with family and neighbors of our vulnerable citizens, help look out for these individuals."

The Tennessee Department of Health recently advised the public on what to look for and how to prevent heat-related illnesses. Symptoms of a heat stroke include: high body temperature; red, hot and dry skin without sweating; rapid pulse; throbbing headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion; and loss of consciousness. Ways to prevent heat-related illnesses and heat stroke include drinking plenty of fluids; replacing salt and minerals; wearing appropriate clothing; and staying cool indoors.

Many Tennesseans, including APS clients, are hesitant to turn on their air conditioners in order to keep their energy bills low. DHS administers the LIHEAP program, which helps low-income citizens pay their cooling and heating bills. Nineteen non-profit and government agencies administer the LIHEAP program in all 95 counties. Eligibility is based on established federal poverty guidelines and the assistance is in the form of a payment to the utility company or home energy provider—not the individual.

The LIHEAP program is 100 percent federally funded. DHS released \$40.8 million in LIHEAP funds to the local providers on July 1. All agencies are currently taking applications and paying eligible clients' utility bills.

For more information on Adult Protective Services, visit: [http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/afs\\_aps.htm](http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/afs_aps.htm) .

**To report possible abuse or neglect of an adult, call toll free 1-888-APS-TENN (1-888-277-8366).**

For more information on the LIHEAP program, visit: [http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/afs\\_he.htm](http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/afs_he.htm)

For a list of community agencies that administer the LIHEAP program, visit:  
<http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/liheap-agencies-05.pdf>

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR  
400 DEADERICK STREET  
NASHVILLE, TN 37248  
615.313.4700